

## ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. 687197615001

**What is claimed is:**

1. A method for supply chain management, the method comprising the steps of:
  - (a) receiving an order for one or more products from a supply chain participant;
  - (b) for each of the one or more products in the received order, determining a buyer and a seller;
  - (c) generating a product shipment configuration and a logistics plan based on the received order, the determined seller, the determined buyer or combinations thereof;
  - (d) determining a transporter based on the generated product shipment configuration, the generated logistics plan, the determined buyer, the determined seller or combinations thereof;
  - (e) transmitting the generated product shipment configuration to the determined buyer, to the determined seller, to the determined transporter or to combinations thereof; and
  - (f) transmitting the generated logistics plan to the determined buyer, to the determined seller, to the determined transporter or to combinations thereof.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the generated logistics plan comprises a configuration of shipment in a selected cargo container.
3. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the steps of (g) receiving data associated with one or more products from a seller and (h) storing the received data in a system data store.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the received data comprises containerization constraints.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein at least one step selected from the group consisting of step (b), step (c) and step (d) comprises the step of accessing the system data store.
6. The method of claim 3, and further comprising the step of (i) formatting the received data in a seller-independent data format.
7. The method of claim 3, wherein the received data is received by an access server.

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8. The method of claim 7, wherein the access server is of a type selected from the group consisting of ftp server, e-mail server, web server, interactive voice/tone response system, fax server and combinations thereof.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the received order is received by an access server.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the access server is of a type selected from the group consisting of ftp server, e-mail server, web server, interactive voice/tone response system, fax server and combinations thereof.
11. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of (g) formatting the received order in a buyer and seller independent format.
12. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of (g) storing the received order in a system data store and wherein steps (b) and (c) comprise the step of accessing the received order in the system data store.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining the buyer and the seller for each of the one or more products comprises the steps of:
  - (i) retrieving an entry for each product from a system data store;
  - (ii) identifying the buyer for each product from the received order or the retrieved entry for that product; and
  - (iii) identifying the seller for each product from the received order or the retrieved entry for that product.
14. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of identifying the seller for each product comprises the step of selecting the seller based upon a criterion selected from the group consisting of pricing constraints, volume constraints, distance constraints, time constraints, performance constraints, financial constraints, and combinations thereof.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of (c) generating the product shipment configuration and the logistics plan comprises the steps of:
  - (i) retrieving an entry for each product from a system data store;
  - (ii) identifying containerization constraints associated with each product from the retrieved entry;

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- (iii) developing a containerization plan for each product in the received order;
  - (iv) allocating the received order into one or more shipments based upon the containerization plan; and
  - (v) developing a route plan to satisfy the one or more shipments based upon the allocation of the received order into the one or more shipments and upon the received order.
16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of allocating the received order into one or more shipments comprises the step of comparing capacity requirements of the received order based upon the containerization plan with capacity of a selected cargo space.
17. The method of claim 16, and further comprising the step of selecting the cargo space.
18. The method of claim 17, wherein the cargo space selection is based upon the received order, the containerization plan, cargo space availability, destination of a shipment, cost, cargo space capacity, origin of a shipment or combinations thereof.
19. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of developing the route plan comprises the step of optimizing mode of shipment, cost of transport, speed of shipment or combinations thereof.
20. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of (g) receiving a request for the generated product shipment configuration from a buyer, from a seller or from a transporter and wherein the step of transmitting the product shipment configuration is in response to the received request.
21. The method of claim 20, wherein the request for the generated product shipment configuration is received via an access server.
22. The method of claim 1, wherein the generated product shipment configuration is transmitted via a delivery platform selected from the group consisting of e-mail, web, ftp, fax, courier service, postal mail, telephone, pager and combinations thereof.

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23. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of (g) receiving a request for the generated logistics plan from a seller, from a buyer or from a transporter and wherein the step of transmitting the generated logistics plan is in response to the received request.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein the request for a logistics plan is received via an access server.
25. The method of claim 1, wherein the generated logistics plan is transmitted via a delivery platform selected from the group consisting of e-mail, web, ftp, fax, courier service, postal mail, pager, telephone and combinations thereof.
26. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of (g) receiving event data associated with the generated logistics plan.
27. The method of claim 26, wherein the received event data is received from the buyer, a seller or a transporter.
28. The method of claim 26, wherein the event data is received via an access server.
29. The method of claim 26, and further comprising the steps of (h) generating one or more exception reports based upon the received event data and the generated logistics plans and (i) outputting a selected exception report from the one or more generated exception reports to a recipient, wherein the recipient is a user or a computer system.
30. The method of claim 29, wherein the recipient is a user.
31. The method of claim 30, wherein the selected exception report is output via a delivery platform selected from the group consisting of e-mail, web, ftp, fax, courier service, postal mail, telephone, pager, instant messaging and combinations thereof.
32. The method of claim 30, wherein the user is the determined buyer, the determined seller, the determined transporter or a supply chain management administrator.
33. The method of claim 29, and further comprising the step of (j) selecting a delivery platform for the generated exception report based upon configuration information associated with the recipient.

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34. The method of claim 29, wherein the recipient is a computer system and wherein the computer system is a notification forwarding system, a transporter evaluation system, a seller evaluation system, a buyer evaluation system or combinations thereof.
35. The method of claim 29, and further comprising the step of (j) selecting an exception report for output from the one or more generated exception reports.
36. The method of claim 35, wherein the step of selecting the exception report for output is based upon the recipient, a priority associated with each exception report or combinations thereof.
37. The method of claim 29, and further comprising the step of (j) receiving an exception report request from the recipient and wherein the step of outputting the selected exception report is responsive to the received request.
38. The method of claim 37, wherein the exception report request is received via an access server.
39. The method of claim 37, and further comprising the step of (k) selecting an exception report for output from the one or more generated exception reports.
40. The method of claim 39, wherein the step of selecting the exception report for output is based upon the recipient, the received request, a priority associated with each exception report, or combinations thereof.
41. The method of claim 37, and further comprising the step of (k) selecting a delivery platform for the selected exception report based upon the received request, configuration information associated with the recipient or combinations thereof.
42. The method of claim 26, and further comprising the steps of (h) generating one or more exception reports based upon the received event data and the generated logistics plans and (i) transmitting a notification of generation of the one or more exception reports to a recipient, wherein the recipient is a user or a computer system.
43. The method of claim 42, wherein the notification comprises identification information associated with each member of a subset of the one or more generated exception reports.

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44. The method of claim 43, wherein the notification comprises identification information associated with all of the one or more generated exception reports.
45. The method of claim 43, and further comprising the step of (j) determining the subset of one or more generated exception reports.
46. The method of claim 45, wherein the step of determining the subset of one or more generated exception reports is based upon the recipient.
47. The method of claim 43, wherein the identification information comprises a link that upon activation by the recipient allows access to the exception report associated therewith.
48. The method of claim 42, wherein the recipient is a user selected from the group consisting of the determined buyer, the determined seller, the determined transporter, a supply chain management administrator and combinations thereof.
49. The method of claim 42, wherein the notification is transmitted via a delivery platform selected from the group consisting of e-mail, web, ftp, fax, courier service, postal mail, telephone, pager and combinations thereof.
50. The method of claim 26, and further comprising the steps of (h) generating one or more exception reports based upon the received event data and the generated logistics plan.
51. The method of claim 26, and further comprising the steps of (h) transmitting a notification of receipt of event data to a recipient, wherein the recipient is a user or a computer system.
52. The method of claim 51, wherein the notification comprises identification information associated with the received event data.
53. The method of claim 52, wherein the identification information comprises a link that upon activation by the recipient allows access to the event data associated therewith.
54. The method of claim 51, and further comprising the step of (i) selecting a recipient for notification.
55. The method of claim 54, wherein the step of selecting the recipient for notification is based upon the received event data.

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56. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of (g) transmitting a notification of generation of the product shipment configuration to the determined buyer, to the determined seller, to the determined transporter or combinations thereof.
57. The method of claim 56, wherein the notification comprises a link that upon activation allows access to the generated product shipment configuration.
58. The method of claim 57, wherein the step of transmitting the generated product shipment configuration is responsive to activation of the link in the notification.
59. The method of claim 1, and further comprising the step of (g) transmitting a notification of the generated logistics plan to the determined buyer, to the determined seller, to the determined transporter or combinations thereof.
60. The method of claim 59, wherein the notification comprises a link that upon activation allows access to the generated logistics plan.
61. The method of claim 60, wherein the step of transmitting the generated logistics plan manifest is responsive to activation of a selected link in the notification.
62. The method of claim 1, wherein the generated product shipment configuration comprises a three-dimensional model for organizing one or more portions of the received order in a selected cargo space.
63. One or more computer readable media storing instructions that upon execution by a system processor cause the system processor to provide supply chain management by performing steps comprising of:
  - (a) receiving an order for one or more products from a buyer or a seller;
  - (b) for each of the one or more products in the received order, determining a buyer and a seller by performing steps comprising of:
    - (i) retrieving an entry for each product from a system data store;
    - (ii) identifying the buyer for each product from the received order or the retrieved entry for that product; and
    - (iii) identifying the seller for each product from the received order or the retrieved entry for that product based upon a criterion selected from the group consisting of pricing constraints, volume

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- constraints, distance constraints, time constraints, performance constraints, financial constraints, and combinations thereof;
- (c) generating a product shipment configuration and a logistics plan based on the received order, the determined seller, the determined buyer or combinations thereof by performing steps comprising of:
    - (i) retrieving an entry for each product from a system data store;
    - (ii) identifying containerization constraints associated with each product from the retrieved entry;
    - (iii) developing a containerization plan for each product in the received order;
    - (iv) allocating the received order into one or more shipments based upon the containerization plan; and
    - (v) developing a route plan to satisfy the one or more shipments based upon the allocation of the received order into the one or more shipments and upon the received order;
  - (d) determining a transporter based on the generated product shipment configuration, the generated logistics plan, the determined buyer, the determined seller or combinations thereof;
  - (e) transmitting the generated product shipment configuration to the determined buyer, to the determined seller, to the determined transporter or to combinations thereof;
  - (f) transmitting the generated logistics plan to the determined buyer, to the determined seller, to the determined transporter or to combinations thereof;
  - (g) receiving event data associated with the generated logistics plan;
  - (h) generating one or more exception reports based upon the received event data and the generated logistics plans; and
  - (i) outputting a selected exception report from the one or more generated exception reports to a recipient, wherein the recipient is a user selected from the group consisting of the determined buyer, the determined seller, the determined transporter, a supply chain management



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administrator and combinations thereof or a computer system selected from the group consisting of a notification forwarding system, a transporter evaluation system, a seller evaluation system, a buyer evaluation system or combinations thereof.

64. A supply chain management system, the system comprising:

- (a) a system data store capable of storing product data, seller data, buyer data, transporter data, one or more logistics plans, one or more product shipment configurations or combinations thereof; and
- (b) a system processor in communication with the system data store and comprising one or more processing elements, wherein the one or more processing elements are programmed or adapted to perform steps comprising of:
  - (i) receiving an order for one or more products from a buyer or a seller;
  - (ii) storing the received order in the system data store;
  - (iii) for each of the one or more products in the received order, determining a buyer and a seller by performing steps comprising of:
    - (A) retrieving an entry for each product from the system data store;
    - (B) identifying the buyer for each product from the received order or the retrieved entry for that product; and
    - (C) identifying the seller for each product from the received order or the retrieved entry for that product based upon a criterion selected from the group consisting of pricing constraints, volume constraints, distance constraints, time constraints, performance constraints, financial constraints, and combinations thereof;
  - (iv) generating a product shipment configuration and a logistics plan based on the received order, the determined seller, the

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determined buyer or combinations thereof by performing steps comprising of:

- (A) retrieving an entry for each product from the system data store;
  - (B) identifying containerization constraints associated with each product from the retrieved entry;
  - (C) developing a containerization plan for each product in the received order;
  - (D) allocating the received order into one or more shipments based upon the containerization plan; and
  - (E) developing a route plan to satisfy the one or more shipments based upon the allocation of the received order into the one or more shipments and upon the received order;
- (v) determining a transporter based on the generated product shipment configuration, the generated logistics plan, the determined buyer, the determined seller or combinations thereof;
  - (vi) transmitting the generated product shipment configuration to the determined buyer, to the determined seller, to the determined transporter or to combinations thereof;
  - (vii) transmitting the generated logistics plan to the determined buyer, to the determined seller, to the determined transporter or to combinations thereof;
  - (viii) receiving event data associated with the generated logistics plan;
  - (ix) generating one or more exception reports based upon the received event data and the generated logistics plans; and
  - (x) outputting a selected exception report from the one or more generated exception reports to a recipient, wherein the recipient is a user selected from the group consisting of the determined buyer, the determined seller, the determined transporter, a supply chain management administrator and combinations thereof or a

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computer system selected from the group consisting of a notification forwarding system, a transporter evaluation system, a seller evaluation system, a buyer evaluation system or combinations thereof.

65. The system of claim 64, wherein the system data store comprises a database management system that manages a product database.
66. The system of claim 64, wherein the system processor comprises one or more access servers that perform at least one of steps (i), (vi), (vii), (viii) or (x).
67. The system of claim 64, wherein the system processor comprises one or more processing servers that perform at least a portion of at least one of steps (iii), (iv), (v) or (ix).
68. A supply chain management system, the system comprising:
  - (a) storing means for storing one or more orders from a buyer or a seller, product data, seller data, buyer data, transporter data, one or more logistics plans, one or more product shipment configurations or combinations thereof;
  - (b) input means for:
    - (i) receiving an order for one or more products from a buyer or a seller and storing the received order in the storing means,
    - (ii) receiving product data associated with one or more products from a seller and storing the received the product data in the storing means, and
    - (iii) receiving event data associated with a logistics plan and storing the received event data in the storing means;
  - (c) logistics processing means for
    - (i) determining a buyer and a seller for each product in an order received by the input means by performing steps comprising of:
      - (A) retrieving an entry for each product in the order from the storing means;
      - (B) identifying the buyer for each product from the order or the retrieved entry for that product; and

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- (C) identifying the seller for each product from the order or the retrieved entry for that product;
- (ii) generating a product shipment configuration and a logistics plan based at least in part on the order, the determined seller or buyer associated with the order, or combinations thereof by performing steps comprising of:
  - (A) retrieving an entry for each product from the storing means;
  - (B) identifying containerization constraints associated with each product from the retrieved entry;
  - (C) developing a containerization plan for each product in the order;
  - (D) allocating the order into one or more shipments based upon the containerization plan; and
  - (E) developing a route plan to satisfy the one or more shipments based upon the allocation of the received order into the one or more shipments and upon the order;
- (iii) determining a transporter based on the generated product shipment configuration, the generated logistics plan, the determined buyer, the determined seller or combinations thereof; and
- (iv) generating one or more exception reports based upon event data received by the input means associated with the generated logistics plan; and
- (d) output means for:
  - (i) transmitting a logistics plan to a buyer associated with the logistics plan, a seller associated with the logistics plan, a transporter associated with the logistics plan or combinations thereof;
  - (ii) transmitting a product shipment configuration to a buyer associated with the product shipment configuration, a seller

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- associated with the product shipment configuration, a transporter associated with the product shipment configuration or combinations thereof; and
- (iii) outputting an exception report to a recipient, wherein the recipient is a user selected from the group consisting of a buyer associated with the exception report, a seller associated with the exception report, a transporter associated with the exception report, a supply chain management administrator associated with the exception report and combinations thereof, or wherein the recipient is a computer system selected from the group consisting of a notification forwarding system, a transporter evaluation system, a seller evaluation system, a buyer evaluation system or combinations thereof.